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# Christian Order

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## *Newman University College — Naples*

**T**HE UNIVERSITY of Naples has some 45,000 students, about three times as many as Oxford and Cambridge combined. The Newman College is a rat-infested building in the midst of a noisy Neapolitan slum where an English priest is ministering to 26 students. These men, mostly from very poor homes, are seeking degrees in order to find gainful employment. They only attend the University for lectures and exams and otherwise live in squalid surroundings, never being sure whether there'll be enough in the kitty for the next meal. They are easy prey to the moral licence of Naples; soon discard any religion they may have learnt and succumb only too readily to the insidious propaganda of the Communists.

The Newman College was founded by Mgr. Bruno James ten years ago as a direct challenge to this situation and to provide a nucleus of carefully chosen students with the opportunity of continuing their studies under conditions they would never have believed possible.

The majority soon respond to the atmosphere of affection, trust and sense of personal responsibility which Mgr. James has so successfully fostered with endless patience and compassion.

It is a vital work, vital for them, vital for all of us in the West, whatever our nationality, who want to see the West survive against the forces of evil. But this work is sadly hampered by lack of funds. If you have read this far and believe that the task Mgr. James has set himself is not only just worthwhile but desperately important, would you help by joining in the sacrifices already being made by other friends and benefactors and send whatever you can to The Collegio Newman Fund at the address below. All contributions and letters will be acknowledged by the Hon. Treasurer (U.K.), Mr. D. Belson, Collier's Farm, Frieth, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon.

(This space has been kindly given by  
Father Paul Crane, S.J.)

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**CHRISTIAN ORDER** is a monthly magazine devoted to the promulgation of Catholic Social Teaching and incisive comment on current affairs in Church and State; at home and abroad; in the political, social and industrial fields.

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# Christian Order

EDITED BY

Paul Crane SJ

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## Little Men on a Noble Theme

THE EDITOR

I WAS one of many, I think, who decided early on that I could take no more of the BBC series on the British Empire. I walked out on it after the fourth episode irritated and, indeed, angry. I knew instinctively the series was all wrong. I knew I hated it. The trouble was I could not say exactly why. It is often like that. The people who stand for the good things are often inexpert at formulating on the spot the replies that have to be made to the slick little men — the army of abrasively-minded “experts” with their unequalled powers of brittle denigration — who spend most of their unlovely lives trying to tear them down.

It is the same these days in the Church, but that is another story. In the case of the BBC’s empire series, however, the reason for its rottenness — the perfect summing up of its all-pervading nastiness — came in the form of a letter to *The Times* written on March 10th, whilst the series was well into its second half. Wrote Mr. A. P. Ryan:



"Watching last night for the first time the BBC's British Empire special serial, I was struck by one aspect of the programme that stands out above all others. Those responsible evidently feel themselves superior to the men — missionaries, soldiers, administrators — whom they purport to describe. An air of amused patronage is all-pervasive. Godlike persons quizzically survey the goings-on of delinquent pygmies. How this comfortable sense of having a monopoly of wisdom, compassion and tolerance came to be self-induced in the producers I cannot imagine. Cosily bedded down in it they distribute sneers, smears and jeers, with here and there a pat on the back. This approach to history is, of course, old-fashioned, half a century out of date. Lytton Strachey and lots of bath water stuff."

That is it, perfectly. We are back again at a point made before in *Christian Order*. Man's fulfilment is only through recognition of his dependence on God. His attitude, in consequence, must be one of reverence for all God has made and all that men, with good intention and nobility of purpose, have done on this earth. Let God be discarded and man is left with the impossible task of achieving fulfilment as a person in independence of God, in isolation, therefore, from his roots as a human being, which are in God. He is turned, thereby, into a self-seeker, a denier of his origin; a wrecker who puts others down to put himself up; an inflated cynic who downgrades all — authority, hierarchy, noble deeds, beauty, love and tenderness — that gives witness to the values that come from God and reminds him, therefore, of his obligation to recognise in word and deed the sovereignty of his Creator. Man without God has to destroy — cumulatively and without pause — to remind himself of his self-importance. Continually he has to downgrade God in his works to remind himself that he is and God is not. So, the sneers at good men and their noble deeds — those who built the Empire in blood and sweat and tears

— handed out in the script of the empire series and rammed home by omission and slight; the whole handed out to all of us by its producers and writers who, as Mr. Ryan so well observes “evidently feel themselves superior to the men — missionaries, soldiers, administrators — whom they purport to describe”.

And I am fully in agreement with the case made by Mr. Ryan in the second half of his letter to *The Times*:

“When the BBC has picked the last flesh off the bones of the British Empire builders, I urge it to turn to Russian imperialism. A programme dealing with the colonial progress of the Soviets, done in the style of the current British one, would indeed put the cat among the left-winging pigeons of Broadcasting House and Television Centre.. The enslavement of Latvia, Esthonia and Lithuania would be highlighted. How many of our vociferous Marxists and Maoists know about the grim fate of the Baltic countries or of other skeletons lying thick in the Moscow cupboard that the BBC research workers would reveal? Alas, such a programme is not trendy, so I fear the chances are remote of its being risked by the BBC in its present and (let us hope) transient state of complacent, muddled thinking.”

What about it gentlemen? A brittle account of the Russian Bolshevik Empire from Stalin's time until today? No holds barred, the whole story unveiled with that particularly abrasive manner which you reserve, as a rule, for the denigration of your own people. If *per impossibile* you told the truth in public of Russian Communism's imperial progress, it would be a step, at least, in the direction of your redemption from the parody of a noble venture which you have had the impertinence this year to impose with such arrogance on Britain's viewing public.

Our attention was drawn recently to a very striking article written by Gary Potter and published last year in the United States. We reproduce it below by courtesy of *Rough Beast*, a small periodical like our own for which we have increasingly high regard.

## The American Way of Death 1878-1971

GARY POTTER

LAST November 6 a five-megaton nuclear warhead was exploded at Amchitka Island, Alaska. That same day, my wife's grandmother was killed in a nursing home in Iowa. The explosion in Alaska, a weapons test, was a matter of great importance to all informed observers; to many it was an event full of menace, and even its advocates, who thought it a necessity, regarded it as a regrettable one. The life of the lady who died in Iowa was mainly important to us of her family and some friends (it evidently had no importance at all to the persons into whose care she'd recently been put) and, besides piety and great practical wisdom, she was chiefly full of years; 93 of them; venerable indeed. Her name was Elizabeth Meinders.

### *Amchitka Island*

Nuclear weaponry, ultimate totem of the modern nation's puissance, is also the perfect symbol of the "progress" of modern science and technology. It is a quite new element to reckon with in the consideration of human affairs: "progress" furnished it to us only in the



last quarter-century, along with so many other "goods" that did not exist when Mrs. Meinders was born nearly 100 years ago. On the other hand, death has always been a part of the human condition, but the manner of Mrs. Meinders' dying was also, I believe, tragically different from that of most persons 100 years, or even a quarter-century, ago.

Observers who view the Amchitka test with alarm were, generally speaking, persons who believe that the number of technical interventions made in the environment during recent times has reached such a dangerous level that irreparable harm is about to be done to the world. Among those who did not oppose the test, including those who do not oppose "progress" in general, there seems to be a class who believe that even if irreparable harm is done to this world, another can be built, perhaps on the moon. Opponents of the Amchitka test, "environmentalists" if you will, would include certain men who not merely believe that the best should be made of the world as it is but that it is positively evil for some to try to reshape it as they think it should be (that is, the world, no more than life itself, is not ours to dispose of at will; it belongs to its Creator). It is religious men of whom I speak. Being religious men, they believe God punishes evil. I think some of them must have expected dramatic consequences from the Amchitka test. A few, I think, might actually have hoped for them. Surely, if the top of the world were blown off at Amchitka, even the AEC's scientists would take that as an indication they should not test five-megaton warheads subterraneously, if not as a direct signal from God Himself to all humanity to stop now, to go no further, to let us know that finally we had reached the limits of our finite nature. The earth did not crack. California did not sink. There were no tidal waves.

I think the expected signals can be read in the death of Elizabeth Meinders.



## *An Old Lady's World*

Mrs. Meinders was born in Iowa and lived there her whole life. The Iowa and the United States where she was born were rather different from the state and nation of today. How different? It is difficult to compass in the limited imagination the extent of the radical changes, merely the material ones, that can have been wrought in so relatively short a span of time as the last century, the single lifetime of a person who has just died, but I have heard that when Mrs. Meinders' own grandfather, an immigrant from Germany, passed through Chicago on the way to the Iowa Territory, the place consisted of a trading post and a barracks: the place was radically different from the Chicago of today; yet, through her grandfather, Mrs. Meinders' own life touched that rough spot where stands now the nation's second city. Let that difference between the trading post-stockade and contemporary Chicago stand as a symbol of the difference between the world Mrs. Meinders first knew and ours of today. There are other symbols.

When Mrs. Meinders was born Rutherford B. Hayes was President of the United States (of which there were then 38). Perhaps you have never heard of Hayes? Well, elsewhere in the world, Queen Victoria of England would reign for two more decades over a vast and mighty empire, indeed the mightiest power on earth; the last Russian Tsar, still a boy of ten, was years away from ascending his throne; Kaiser Wilhelm II, the last German Emperor, was not yet even Crown Prince (Kaiser Karl I, the last Austrian Emperor, was not yet even born); and there have been seven popes since then. Since 1878 a very great deal has changed in the world.

Mrs. Meinders was fully aware of the changes that had taken place. Until the onset of the troubles which led to her death, she read a newspaper every day. Her grasp of current events, I suspect, may have been firmer than that of her granddaughter, my wife. I remember that when she visited us in Washington two summers ago — she

had come by automobile, all the way from her home — she said, upon seeing the White House, “So that’s where Nixon lives.” Of course it was. One would expect anybody to know that, but can you say off-handedly who lived in the White House in 1883, 1891, 1907? Eighteen men lived there during Mrs. Meinders’ lifetime. I wasn’t sure, when I heard her observation, that if I’d seen the same parade of men pass through the place the last 90 years I’d recall the particular fellow who happened to inhabit it at a given moment, including this one now.

### *Detached from Events*

Firm as was her grasp of the world, Nixon’s world as well as that of R. B. Hayes, her view of affairs was remarkably detached. This detached view could have seemed like indifference, even senility, to an outsider, if senility be defined as a lack of responsiveness to the world. But we who were intimate knew she was not unresponsive, not senile. Undeniably, she had her games, an old person’s games. Now they are cherished memories.

“What’s that you’re drinking?” she’d say to me.

“It’s bourbon, Grandma.”

“Bourbon? What’s that?”

I’d hesitate. “Whiskey,” I’d finally say.

“Whiskey?” She’d fix me with an expression of total disapproval and then ask, all incredulous, “You like whiskey. Don’t you?”

“Yes Grandma”, I’d admit, “I like whiskey. Don’t you?”

“I could stand a little drop.”

I always gave it to her. She always drank it. I should emphasize, I never saw her take more than one drink.

As I say, there was nothing senile about her, not as I knew her, but there was her detachment. I believe it was partially due simply to her having seen so much. It was not that she was unresponsive to the world; the world simply no longer shocked her.

What great issue or event agitating us in recent days had she not already had occasion to consider? The war? Already a lady of 40 at the end of the *First World War*, Mrs. Meinders had witnessed six of the seven foreign wars waged by the United States. Racial conflict? She could remember being scooped up and bundled into the house by her mother when some Indians suddenly appeared nearby — Little Big Horn had happened only a couple of years before, Wounded Knee was years in the future. Presidential assassination? Could the one in 1963 seem as momentous to her as it did to many when she could personally recall two of the three others in our history?

Born as she was before the advent of electric lighting, the automobile, the telephone, radio, the newer prodigies of science and technology did not impress her overmuch. I once asked her what she thought of seeing men on the moon, live, in colour. "Oh," she said, "I suppose it's all right." Her many years had clearly made her extremely tolerant.

Nothing was more important to her than her Lutheran faith, which was very strict and had been forged in a time when religion — and religious differences — was serious business, but her tolerance extended to all the areas of her life, even religion. Once or twice in my hearing she let pass an anti-papist remark, yet she accepted it calmly when he granddaughter married me in the Catholic Church. "Oh, I've known some nice enough Catholics" was her statement on the occasion.

Tolerant, then, temperate also, alert, devout, sage with years — those were some of Mrs. Meinders' mental and spiritual characteristics and virtues. Intact as were her mental and spiritual faculties, the sheer weight of her 90-plus years did bear on her body. Though far from being bedridden (I have said that merely two summers ago she was capable of the long car trip from Iowa to Washington), she did have difficulty at times walking and she recently made frequent use of a wheelchair. If you asked her how she felt, she would reply, regretfully, and almost invariably, "I'm all

right, but I used to be able to run like a deer." There was wistfulness in the remark, and resignation, but also a subdued note of anger, as if she felt she had been betrayed — by her own body — and who could doubt her word? Yet there was no one still living who remembered her running.

### *Preparing for Death*

From the fact that so many she'd known and loved had already passed on and from her religious devotion was derived another of Mrs. Meinders' memorable characteristics: prudence. She deemed it prudent to devote much of her energy these last years to preparing for the inevitable. This, also, must have accounted for her apparent detachment. I never thought to put the question to her, but I believe that if I'd asked her why she spent so much time preparing for death, she'd have answered, "What else is old age for?" She was preparing to put behind her the things of this world, she was detaching herself from them. In her 93 years she'd seen a great deal of death and she must have acquired an understanding of it. It surely seemed that death, no more than anything else, would surprise her. Yet it did, it did.

Dying was once something accomplished at home. That was the case for even the poorest of men. That was so because first of all in 1878, say, there simply was no place else to die, no more than there was another place, besides the open field, to give birth. Also, dying being part of life, home seemed a suitable place to do it since that is where one had done the rest of one's living. Unless he were caught fatally by hazard far from home, every man could expect to die there — in the bosom of his family, as the expression went. Loved ones actually held your hand, they wiped your brow. You were going anyway; they tried to ease it for you.

I've said Mrs. Meinders was as aware of the world from which she died as the one into which she was born, but as with most persons many of her ideas regarding important



areas of life must have been formed by early observations. There is no more important area of life than death and I sense that she must have expected, must have prayed, that her death would be the sort she knew best and which she had schooled herself to accept, if perhaps with ever so slightly rebellious a spirit, as she accepted the infirmity of an aged body. By rights, such a death ought to have been hers.

Like all really wise persons, Mrs. Meinders had made it a lifelong policy to avoid doctors, except in direst need, and to stay completely away from hospitals or any other institution purporting to care for the unwell or infirm. She was not alone in her feeling about such places. Her daughter, my mother-in-law, had her in her home, as she had for a number of years, when her final difficulties began in August. That is, unlike many others who, by virtue merely of years, find themselves in "nursing" homes at a certain point in their lives, Mrs. Meinders was not one. Inasmuch as she required no "nursing," was not unwell, never truly infirm, why should she have been? Also unlike many others, of course, she had a daughter who was willing to have her at home and to see to her wants, which were always limited. The thought may never have been verbalized, but everyone, including Mrs. Meinders, must have taken it for granted that the end would come for her in her daughter's home, among her family. I have never heard my mother-in-law say it in so many words, but I know and love her well, and I believe that she always meant not merely to care for Grandma in life but also to furnish her a place — home — for dying.

### *In Hospital*

In August, Mrs. Meinders complained of some pains. My wife, who was visiting her mother and grandmother at the time, told me on the phone that the family doctor was away, that others had been consulted, and they recommended that Mrs. Meinders be taken to a local hospital for an examination, one more thorough than could be done

at home. There should have been nothing alarming in the idea of hospitalization for no more reason than a thorough physical. After all, there are trained staff at a hospital, specialists, laboratories, machines (many newly developed) — surely the reason for Grandma's pain could be more easily and accurately discovered in hospital than at home. It was reasonable. Yet Virginia (my wife) and I were both uneasy at the idea of Mrs. Meinders in the hospital for *any* reason. She was herself less than enthusiastic.

As Virginia and her mother left her on the first evening of her first hospital stay, my mother-in-law said, "Well, we're going."

"And leave me in the presence of mine enemies?" said Mrs. Meinders.

It was a line from the best known, and Mrs. Meinders' favourite, of all the Psalms. "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."

She was in the place for merely a few days. Because Virginia and her mother thought they discerned a casualness, even a certain callousness, in the institution's treatment of Mrs. Meinders, they were quite pleased when the doctors told them there was no need for worry, Grandma could go back home.

### *Near Death; then Recovery*

The doctors at the hospital had completely failed to detect a massive internal abscess which burst in the evening soon after Grandma's return. I was later appalled to learn that small Iowa cities of 30,000 population are apparently no different than New York or Washington on one score: despite all the pleas of Virginia and my mother-in-law no doctor would come to the house. All through the night the two women carried on as best they could. The blood and matter was coming in prodigious quantities: every convenient receptacle, basins, bowls, pans, even a kitty litter box, was put to use; Veronica, Virginia's and my 15-month-old daughter, upset by the turmoil, began to cry but could

not be coped with — there was no time even to empty the pans as Virginia and her mother worked in tandem; the gory containers overflowed the bathroom and kitchen floors, had to be set out in the garage. Finally, at dawn, a doctor agreed to a house call. This gentleman's professional contribution to the situation, seeing the pans spread before him on the garage floor: "That's impossible. If she lost that much blood she'd be dead."

She was in fact so weakened that the doctor would not advise what doctors today always automatically advise, what the doctors a few days before advised: he would not recommend her being moved to hospital, not then.

Yet, weak as she was, she was also strong. Anyone, it seems when you consider it, must be marvellously strong simply to live 93 years. It was her strength that undid her. Why couldn't the end have been that night? It would have been far better. There were moments when Grandma actually cried out for it to be. She was too strong, however. Her God had made her so strong she was yet to endure a death unlike any she had ever expected.

### *Very Young and Very Old*

The members of my wife's family are not numerous. For several generations the family's children have been born at 30-year intervals, rather than the common 20. Thus, Mrs. Meinders, though already past 90, had no greatgrandchild until the birth of Veronica, my daughter. The two of them, the old lady and the infant girl, had a close and warm relationship. They appeared to understand each other uncannily. This often seems to be the case with the very young and very old. Virginia suggests it is because they are both so near God.

Mrs. Meinders and my daughter first met when Veronica was three weeks old; Mrs. Meinders was the one member of the family who never seemed to tire of holding her. Several months later, when Veronica went on whole milk and began to use a bottle, it was Mrs. Meinders who taught her how to hold it for herself. During the past summer,

with Veronica more than a year old and highly mobile, only Mrs. Meinders could keep her in one spot, restoring a bit of tranquility to the household in Iowa; this with interminable games of peek-a-boo. No other grown-up had the patience for it. In the morning after that first crisis, after the doctor had left, before anyone could stop her, Veronica climbed onto Mrs. Meinders' bed. She grabbed a crumpled Kleenex lying there and with it wiped some sweat from her greatgrandmother's forehead. My wife has told me that it wasn't until days later that she saw Veronica's gesture in the light of the act once performed by her namesake.

During those days, as Mrs. Meinders recovered something of herself, there were countless games of peek-a-boo, the child standing at the foot of the bed, Mrs. Meinders frequently racked by pain nobody nearly a century old is meant to bear. How did she bear hers? Her heart, her lungs, all her organs were extraordinarily fit we were told. It was necessary, however, to finally readmit her to the hospital.

### *Hospital Again*

It surely was necessary, wasn't it? The abscess had to be completely cleaned, it had to be healed. It was business Virginia and her mother weren't equipped to handle, the doctors wouldn't treat Mrs. Meinders at home, no more than they'd do anything else there, even examine her.

It was in the hospital that I last saw her. She had been there, in bed, for two or three weeks. I was deeply distressed after seeing her.

One of her favourite games was always played whenever she met you after a long absence.

"Let's see, you're who?" she'd ask.

"I'm Gary, Grandma."

"Gary? Gary? Who's Gary?"

"I'm Virginia's husband."

"You live in Washington, don't you?"

She knew perfectly well who I was, there was no doubt.



It was her way of reestablishing contact, of opening conversation, her game, and it had to be played by her rules. I once overheard her exchange with a gentleman who incautiously tried to change them.

He didn't wait for her. He opened the play: "Do you know who I am?" he asked.

"Yes, I do," she replied, "don't you?"

In the hospital room, I had the impression that for the first time she really might not know who I was. Never had I seen her so enervated, so listless. Never before had I seen her listless, period. And her eyes! A 93-year-old junkie, was that possible?

My wife explained that the nurses gave Mrs. Meinders drugs, "to keep her quiet."

"Quiet! How noisy can a bedridden 93-year-old woman be?"

"No, it's just that if she asks for anything when it's not scheduled it disturbs the routine. They're busy."

"Oh, c'mon. What? A glass of water?"

"I know. But what can we do?"

What indeed?

### A "Nuisance"

Her moral state was not the only thing troubling about Mrs. Meinders' condition. We noted a vicious bruise, actually an open wound, on one elbow (an old person's skin can be exceedingly tender). There were similar bruises elsewhere on her body. We enquired of the nurses how the bruises had been inflicted. Blithely, we were told she bruised herself trying to get out of bed. The bed in question had high railings all around it. An old lady who's lately needed a wheelchair to get around tried by herself, in a drugged state, to climb over those barriers? That's what we asked. We were told: Yes!

If the nurses were going to bang her around, *wounding* her, as they clearly were, what else might they do, what other horrors of carelessness, even maliciousness, might be perpetrated? Mrs. Meinders was clearly not popular with

the staff. She was a nuisance; so it seemed. But, as Virginia asked, what could we do? We didn't want to take her home simply to die. We wanted her to live comfortably and well. For that she needed healing. The alleged healers said the only place for the healing was here, in the hospital.

Mrs. Meinders was most of all a nuisance about the catheter. My mother-in-law, who'd cared for her for years, knew she was not, had never been, incontinent, yet a catheter had been inserted in her urethra. This did spare the nurses having to attend to a bed-pan but it created another problem. Mrs. Meinders was evidently offended by the plastic tubing, especially inserted as it was in a part of her body she probably regarded as not merely private but inviolate (nothing could more accurately reflect her 19th-century upbringing). When she was sufficiently undrugged, she pulled the catheter out. Not once. At least three times. Incredible. I flinched whenever I imagined the pain her action must have caused. I don't know if the nurses considered the pain, but they were furious. When Virginia and I discovered the catheter removed on one of our visits and foolishly reported it ("Please don't make trouble for them, Grandma. You'll only make them mad.") we were banished from the room, saw nurses, faces rigid with anger, rush into it. We heard Grandma scream as they jammed the damned thing back in, but the first nurse out the door met our gaze with equanimity, even smiling. What to do? We felt trapped.

The last time I saw my wife's grandmother alive was with my mother-in-law. When we reached the floor, we found no one at the floor desk. We went straight to Grandma's room. She wasn't there. Wondering where to look, we heard Grandma's voice from the room down the corridor where sitz baths were given. My mother-in-law pulled me back as I was about to step through the door, she wanted to hear what was being said.

Grandma was saying, "Why can't I talk?"

"Because I want to read the paper," the nurse replied.

When we did go into the room, I saw the nurse's paper was turned to the funnies page.

I returned to Washington, leaving Virginia with her family. Mrs. Meinders was in the hospital a while longer. The hospital then asked that she be removed.

I couldn't believe that when Virginia told it to me on the phone.

"Asked you to take her out? But she was in there because they said that was the only place they could treat her. Now they want her out? I mean, she isn't all well is she?"

"No."

"Well why?"

There had been a letter to the hospital from Medicare, it seemed. Formerly, hospitals might keep patients indefinitely, as long as necessary to get the job done, the job that needed doing; that's why the patient was there. Today, the Medicare "benefits" are exhausted, and that's it. Out. Unless maybe you're actually dying. Ginny quoted a doctor at the hospital, speaking of Mrs. Meinders' case: "Hopefully, we'd thought that she'd have slipped away by now." Those were his exact words. Since she hadn't "slipped away" as scheduled by Medicare, she'd have to leave. I was speechless.

### *A Nursing Home*

The theoretical justification for hospitals, "nursing" homes and all such institutions is that they give care or treatment that can't be done by nonprofessionals anywhere else. Even if you've never particularly believed in them, never had need of them, going to one does seem justified when there is real illness, real infirmity. Even as Mrs. Meinders was expelled from the hospital the doctors expressed the view that if she were taken home she'd require the attention there of two full-time nurses. That was out of the question. Therefore, if it wasn't to be the hospital anymore, the only alternative was a "nursing" home; that is to say, an institution which is alleged to exist in order

to administer nursing. Accordingly, Virginia's mother and aunt surveyed most of the homes in the area and finally settled on one. They moved Mrs. Meinders into it. The place was not a public institution; it was not one of those dank horrors, concentration camps for elderly, now blighting the country, not in outward appearance anyway; it was going to cost the family \$1,000 a month. As it happened, Mrs. Meinders was there but a few weeks.

After helping her mother and aunt install Mrs. Meinders in the place, Virginia came home to Washington. She told me all about the home. It was clean and bright, the newest built and supposedly best equipped home in the vicinity, but she'd found the same routine use of drugs as at the hospital. Every evening everyone got his stupor pill; no one would be any trouble for anyone else, particularly the staff (in addition to professional staff there was considerable volunteer help — Girl Scouts earning badge points, that sort of thing). I was struck by one detail: persons feeling badly often must be encouraged to eat, that is as true of old persons as anyone else. At this "nursing" home undisturbed quiet would reign for the rest of the night; where Mrs. Meinders now lived, no one did anything to encourage eating; food, I gathered, was simply left with the inmates: there it is if you want it. The result was that the relatives or friends of many inmates, including my mother-in-law, visited the establishment twice a day — to feed the inmates. A thousand dollars doesn't buy much anymore, I reflected.

### *Death in a Sitz Bath*

Three weeks after Virginia got home the phone rang at three o'clock one morning. It was Virginia's mother. Grandma had been killed. She was scalded to death in the bathtub. In a sitz bath. I wondered what nurse this time had been reading the funnies.

No one had actually been reading the paper. It might as well have been the case, however. Beyond the fact that someone had been grossly negligent we shall perhaps



never know exactly what happened. Either someone had simply put Grandma into water already scalding hot and abandoned her despite her protests, or she was left unattended while a malfunctioning electrical device heated up the water. As chance had it, both my mother-in-law and her sister arrived at the "nursing" home, for a visit, within minutes of the event. The place was in turmoil. In the moment's excitement, one nurse was extremely candid. She blurted: "We heard her screaming but we were all too busy to go in." When the remark was reported to us, Virginia and I recollected the scream we'd heard in the hospital corridor, and the satisfied look of the nurse afterwards.

Grandma lingered, in agony, for twelve hours. She was back in one of those beds with the high metal barriers; both her daughters were with her. She complained very little about the pain she was feeling, but it had to be great. Her boiled flesh had turned black and was falling away. A curious thing happened in those hours. Though Grandma was Iowa-born, her first language was German, until the age of eight. No one living had ever heard her speak it. Now at the end, it was suddenly the language in which she prayed. Then, her very last words were: "Give me a kiss." Neither of her daughters could reach over the barriers of the hospital bed to give it. That was all.

### *The American Way of Death*

When we buried Grandma her pastor said that everything he knew about her indicated that she was now with God. It is hardly possible to believe otherwise. All signs, her devotion and piety, her prudence, indicated that she understod her very long life to be a gift from God, which He meant her to use in preparing to meet Him. Not everyone receives such a gift. Consider the case of a young man wiped out driving to work. Yet Grandma's death was more nearly akin to the young man's than it surely was to that of, say, her grandfather. But Grandma's case simply was not unique, you know that. That most of us will have

her institutional kind of dying, or the young man's violent death, and almost no one of us the older kind of demise, an 1878 death — there is the material for meditation.

The majority of us from now on will die in institutions, hospitals, "nursing" homes, and other such places.

Death has always been the ultimate correction of men's lives: it is the wages of sin; but unless all accounts of past dyings have been falsified, it does seem that death, the process of having one's sins corrected, was once easier to bear. It seems to have involved some tears and sincere repentance, and that was about it. Did its relative ease correspond to the sins it corrected?

That young man driving to work, is he aware his life is in God's hands? Chances are that if he has any thoughts at all about his life being in anyone's hands he thinks it is in those of the General Motors engineers. I say that because I believe that if it were otherwise for most of us, we simply wouldn't depend on our cars and all the *things* we have contrived which stand today between us and reality. *Depend*, I say. That means we count on those contrivances to sustain us, not God.

The result is, when the young man's General Motors car breaks his back, he has nothing to say. He asked for it. And if so wretched a death as Grandma's can be visited on her, even on her, that dear, amiable, God-fearing lady, what chances have the rest of us to avoid her fate, the young man's, or worse? Tears and repentance, then, *sweet* death? Who's dying that way? No, for most of us it's going to be the freeway crackup, or the lonely, bitter death of a terminal ward — or the scalding sitz bath.

Why should God, capable as He is of infinite subtlety, arrange for the top of the world to blow off at Amchitka? He can arrange for every man a personal Amchitka. I believe that is possibly just what He's doing. I'm suggesting that the American way of death may in fact be His punishment for our way of life. If you don't believe in Him, let's just say that it's nature fighting back.

This piece is dedicated with, I am afraid, no respect at all to those priests, nuns and religious who have sat moaning these past few years on the "loneliness" of their single state. Let them see what a young African girl gave to preserve it. Let them thank God for her and pray to Sister Maria Clementina that they may have a particle at least of her strength. This story is adapted from the East African Catholic Monthly, *Leadership*.

## Virgin and Martyr

THE life of Sister Maria Clementina was, until the day of her tragic death, like that of any other African nun. Born in Wamba in the Congo (now Zaire) on November 29th, 1939 she died at Isiro on the night of December 1st, 1964. She belonged to the Wabudu tribe and when she was born her family was still pagan. Her mother, Jillian, started her catechumenate in 1940 whilst her father, Ancisi Batiboko, was going to the war in Palestine. Maria Clementine was baptised in 1945 on the same day as her mother. Her pagan name, Nengapeta, was changed into Alfonsina. She would change it again to Maria Clementina when she took her vows as a religious. When she was a little girl, Sister Maria Clementina used to go to the Catholic Mission at Wamba where she received her primary education. She always helped the Sisters of the Child Jesus of Nivelles with their shopping, washing and kitchen work without accepting anything in return. Afterwards she used to return home to help her mother with the house-work and in the fields.

Monsignor Camilo Verfaillie had founded in his diocese a Congregation of African Sisters, the Jamaa Takatifu (Sisters of the Holy Family) whose Mother House was in

Bafwabaka. As soon as she had finished with primary school, Maria Clementina decided she would join this Congregation. She was admitted in 1955 and made her religious profession in 1959. She wanted to become a true Christian nun.

Since her childhood, Sister Maria Clementina had always had a strong devotion to Our Lady and she was always only too anxious to read anything she could get hold of about the Mother of God. Sister Maria Silvana, who knew her well, had this to say: "One day, shortly before the arrival of the rebels in Wamba, she came to visit the hospital. We had just received some small statues of Our Lady. As we knew of her devotion, we gave her one. I can still see the joy and the smile on her face with which she accepted this small gift. For a moment she remained quite still, then suddenly cried out, 'Oh, Bikira Maria, safi mno!' She pressed the statue next to her heart and looked down on it with the expression of a person who cannot hide the love she feels. Before leaving the hospital, she thanked us over and over again. Standing at the corner of the road, which led from the hospital, she looked back and waved, saying, 'I will always keep her with me!'"

In June, 1960, Sister Maria Clementina received her teacher's certificate. From September onwards, she devoted herself completely to teaching in Bafwakaba. She took the greatest interest in her pupils' problems and tried specially to help the poorest amongst them. She was their mother. If one of them was sick, she would stay at her side, if necessary the whole night long. She went beyond this, going out to visit the villages scattered through the equatorial forest country. In the course of her journeys she ran the risk of wild animals and people whom it would be something of an understatement to describe as dangerous. This never stopped Sister Maria Clementina from going out on her journeys to take her happiness, her teaching and the comfort of the Word of God to everyone around. Despite the immensely heavy programme of work she set herself, she was always happy. All her thought and all she did, in



her own community and out of it, were for others. She never thought of herself.

The year 1964 was one of suffering and tears for the Congo. The storm reached Wamba on August 15th and spread fast through the whole region. On Sunday, November 29th, 1964 a big lorry came at noon to Bafwabaka, when the Sisters were getting ready for lunch. Out of it got men armed with guns, spears, knives and sticks. They told the Sisters to get ready to leave for Wamba. There was no time for lunch. Despite assurances from the rebels, the Sisters knew it would be long before they came back; so they took with them blankets and linen. The lorry left with thirty-four Sisters at four in the afternoon. Towards seven, they got to Ibambi. The rebels took them to the Catholic Mission, which was empty as the Fathers had been taken to Wamba. They were locked in the missionaries' house for the night, but could not sleep; every now and then a drunk would break in and shout at them. How did Sister Maria Clementina behave during the journey in the lorry? A witness said: "She acted in a most loving manner. She had brought with her a piece of cloth as a protection against the clouds of dust coming up from the dirt road. The sister next to her had nothing. Sister Clementina slipped her own piece of cloth over this Sister's head and shoulders, keeping only a small corner of it as a protection for herself". During the ride she whispered her rosary and did all she could to encourage and strengthen her companions. At their journey's end for that day, when they tried to get some sleep on the floor of the mission house, she saw that one of the Sisters had no place to lie down. She gave the Sister her own place. "Don't worry", she said, "I'll find something".

On the road the next day, the lorry carrying the Sisters met a jeep in which two or three rebel officers were travelling. The Sisters were made to get down to greet them. They got curses and threats in return and one of the officers shouted at them to get rid of their crosses and rosaries, telling them they would have to put their religious habits aside, dress like the other women of the country and re-

nounce their vows. When the Sisters tried to protect their rosaries and crucifixes, the rebels snatched them away, trampled on them and threw them into the bushes at the roadside.

The lorry with the Sisters on board arrived at Isiro at about 7 p.m. in the evening of November 30th. Some of the Sisters were locked up in a house near the town's airport, others in a building near the town centre. The Mother General, Sister Leontina, and Sister Clementina were to be taken to the building in the town centre, but, as they were about to leave, the rebel soldiers held the young Sister by order of their Colonel. Sister Leontina refused to leave her and the two of them were made to wait where they were until the Colonel had finished eating. After a while, he came up to Sister Maria Clementina and told her that he wanted her for himself that night. The Mother General told him, "This Sister has made a vow to God of her virginity. She cannot do what you ask". The Colonel lost his temper and ordered his men to beat the Sisters. Then, Sister Leontina was taken out of the room and Sister Maria Clementina was left alone to defend herself against the brute who wanted her for himself. She was heard to shout out at him, "It is impossible! I cannot commit this sin. Kill me instead". God gave her strength. Half an hour later she joined the other sisters, her veil torn from her head and her wrists swollen, but with her virginity intact. The colonel had not had his way.

During supper with the other Sisters, she ate little or nothing. Repeatedly she said, to her old novice-mistress, Mother Saveria, "Pray for me! I would rather die! Please pray for me". As she left the table she said, "I feel desperately upset!"

After supper, Colonel Pierre Olombe came in and chose out two of the Sisters, Maria Clementina and John Baptist. He wanted to take them to an out-of-the-way corner, where he would keep Sister Maria Clementina for his own brute pleasure and give Sister John Baptist over to another officer who was with him. The Colonel started to make advances

to Sister Clementina and she at once replied, "No, never; I am ready to die rather than give you what you want". The Colonel ordered her inside a waiting car and she refused. She was then shoved inside by brute force, along with Sister John Baptist. Both Sisters fought back and Sister Clementina kept pushing her feet onto the ground every time the two officers tried to push her further back into the car. The Colonel kept on repeating that he wanted her, but the Sister kept replying, "I would rather die than commit this sin". The humiliation at being persistently refused in this way by a young woman was too much for Colonel Olombe. He lost control of himself and started to lash out at both Sisters with the whole of his strength. They were on the receiving end now of kicks, punches and slaps. He beat them both hard with the butt of his rifle.

Sister John Baptist was the first to go. She fainted and fell to the ground, giving thereafter no further sign of life: the rapist Colonel took no further interest in her. He concentrated the whole of his brutal attention now on Sister Maria Clementina. She was badly wounded now and covered in blood. After a few moments more, she fell down on her knees exhausted. But she still had exceptional vitality. As the Colonel continued to plaster her with blows to every part of her body, she kept calling out, "Hit me; this is what I want". This way she knew she could avoid sin. As the pain welled up all over her, the words of St. Stephen to those who stoned him were on her lips, "May God forgive you, for you know not what you do". Then, she was down on the ground, her strength gone. Colonel Olombe ordered two rebel soldiers to finish her off. Each had a knife. The colonel pointed to the Sister lying on the ground and shouted, "Stab her! Strike at her heart!". The soldiers bent over Sister Maria Clementina and ran her through again and again. The colonel then gave her the *coup de grace*. He lugged his revolver from its holster and shot Sister Maria Clementina.

The rest of the Sisters, locked up in the dining hall, heard the shot. They began to sing the Magnificat.

During the post-conciliar years something like a collective neurosis has gripped the Church. It has risen now to the point where, in an increasing number of Catholic minds, Christianity has become identified with no more than the pursuit of what is vaguely called social justice.

In a series of five articles, the first of which is published below, Father Paul Crane examines and judges this trend.

# The Gospels and Social Justice

## *1: The Contemporary Background*

### THE EDITOR

AT the moment, something very like a collective neurosis appears to have taken grip at all levels within the Church. Reference is to the call ceaselessly made to her members that their task as Christians is to throw themselves into the struggle for social justice; that is, liberate men from all forms of social and political oppression, with the implication—in an increasing number of countries and cases — that, where this necessitates the overturning of what are called oppressive or “violent” (by a misuse of words) structures, revolutionary violence may be used lawfully by Catholics to bring this about.

### *Christian Practice and the Pursuit of Justice.*

Sanction for this kind of activity is said to be found in the Gospels, which are represented by some as revo-



lutionary documents, with Christ as one who came of set purpose and primarily to deliver men not so much from sin and Hell, but from oppressive social structures, man's Redemption even being identified in some cases with his deliverance from injustice through the establishment of a socialist society, by which is meant, not the programme of the British Labour Party, but something very close to what contemporary Catholic revolutionaries think of in their naivete as an idealized Marxist social order. This view, though extreme, is extremely active at present within certain Church circles and pushed by its devotees — through insinuation and double-talk and in all sorts of guises — into every corner of the Church's Life.

In general, the impression is fast being created that the practice of Christianity is no more than the pursuit of justice and that, provided this is done, whatever one's religion may be or one's practice of it, is of little moment. "God", said a young Catholic American girl not long ago, "is other people". I think you see what I mean. Religion is a man-centred thing, a question, really, of human relationships. Good works are all that count. The tendency of the many, who have been bombarded for two or three years now with a propaganda that identifies Christian practice with the pursuit of justice, is to think increasingly of the liberation of man from oppression as a constituent part of the Gospel message. Indeed, in the words of the Synod Fathers in the introduction to their document on *Justice in the World*: "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation". The words, as we shall see later on in this series, are ambiguous. The trouble is that, as they stand, they lend encouragement to those who choose to define the Christian's primary duty as the liberation of man from all forms of social and

political oppression. So far as they are concerned, this liberating duty, which they place on Christians, is identical with the essence of the Gospel message. These days, unfortunately, examples are only too easy to find. It will do no harm to look at a few.

### *Bishops and Social Justice*

On April 22nd, 1971, Bishop Jesus Lopez de Lama told the National Convention of Caritas in Bolivia, of which he is the head, that under-development, poverty, colonialism and dehumanising capitalism were all "occasions of sin". He went on to state that Christians must initiate a process of "profound, urgent, revolutionary change" and declared further that "Christians committed to truth and love must be subversives when faced with unjust orders, and they must be revolutionaries against the structures of oppression". (In other words, If you love Me, get your gun.) Antiquated structures of inequality, he said further, "must be replaced by a new order which serves all men and which respects their dignity as children of God". The implications of this kind of episcopal talk are clear. Unfortunately, the talk itself is not isolated. Commenting on the position papers drawn up by National Episcopal Conferences for consideration at last year's Synod, Father Leo McFadden had this to say; "A radical call for justice runs through the official documents of Bishops' Conferences, as disparate as Brazil and Indonesia, or Canada and Peru. In summary, these documents state that action for justice is a must for the Church of the 1970's. The documents say that if the Church is to be a sign of salvation for men, then the Church must openly fight institutional injustice. Liberation, they say, is the only solution. And by liberation they mean independence — social, political and religious — for all people. To achieve this liberation, the documents say, the Church must be on the side of the poor and oppressed and take a firm stand against foreign and domestic exploitation. Documents emanating mostly, but not exclusively, from the Third World of under-developed

nations call for a Church-backed revolution — a non-violent revolution, if possible, but nevertheless a revolution". These words show, by implication, that the economic understanding of the National Episcopal Conferences to which they refer is near zero and their theology, in reference to the points under discussion, of dubious validity. The point to note, however, is that the tone of their statements, as reported by Father McFadden, illustrates only too well the climate of opinion that typifies a great deal of thinking in the Church today on social matters. In further illustration, take the document drawn up for the Synod by the Peruvian Bishops: "The Gospel cannot be announced in a situation of oppression. If the Church remains aloof from the anguish of men, it risks not being worthy of them. Let the Church sustain governments that aim at constructing a socialist society with a human and Christian content . . . Let it condemn the repressive methods of governments that, in the name of Christian civilization, have recourse to violence and torture. Let the Church recognise the right of the oppressed to fight for justice. Let it express solidarity with their ideals, even though it does not always approve their methods". Let the reader remember, please, at this point, that what we are questioning is not the worthiness of *some* of the objectives indicated by pre-synodal episcopal documents, but the emphasis which appears to be laid on them as constituting the *primary task of Christians in the contemporary world*.

The message of all these pre-synodal, episcopal documents is summed up, you might say, in a phrase taken from the working paper on world justice, which was presented to the Holy Father by the Synod Secretariate. Injustice is there described as "the sin of the universe" and, amongst the paper's final recommendations is one proposing "concrete" actions to arouse world opinion so that it may "wrest from men and from the secular powers the profound changes that true justice requires". This is a very strange and, indeed, sinister recommendation. In fact, the whole

paper, in its ambiguity, would appear to allow those so minded to see the Christian's duty as confined to the liberation of man from injustice and the Gospel message itself as endorsing that view.

### *A False Polarization*

At a lower, but still significant level, there is the advice of Daniel Samper, News Editor of the Bogota (Colombia, South America) daily, *El Tiempo* that "the best consecration to the Sacred Heart could be to work really hard at making our country more just and egalitarian because, judging from the way things are now, mere ceremonies should not please Him". What one has to note here is the false polarization between the interior life of the Christian and the pursuit of justice, with the implication that true Christianity should be identified these days with the latter; that Christ came, in other words, to redeem men not primarily from sin, but from temporal injustice. An unpleasant class-tinge was given to the whole picture by Father Roberto Tucci, Jesuit Editor of *Civiltà Cattolica*. Speaking in New York in the spring of 1971, he was reported as saying that the Churches had a Gospel mandate to come to the defence of the poor, whom he described as "those who cannot make themselves heard" — a very different analysis, indeed, from that given by reputable scripture scholars. He went on to advise that the Churches should bridge what he called "their credibility gap" by siding with the poor against what he called "the establishment". He was reported as saying further in the same speech that the poor mistrusted the Churches because such institutions "without declaring themselves openly in favour of 'the bloodsuckers and the oppressors' give the impression of trying to keep a balance, hitting first one side and then the other". Finally, the Churches should initiate a "truly searching examination of conscience which will lead them to eliminate all that impedes them from being 'believed' by the poor". Apart from the opportunism in Father Tucci's



position, which I find appalling, and the arbitrariness of its leading assumption with regard to the Gospel message, it is usefully taken note of at this point as indicative of the general tendency in many quarters to see the Church's main task as that of resisting what is (quite often, wrongly) thought of as injustice. Undertones of the same partisan outlook, which would appear to urge on the Church a policy of confronting existing "establishments" everywhere, are found in a statement of Father Jose Ortuno, Jesuit Principal of the Institute Patria, on the occasion of the decision to close this fashionable private school in Mexico City and open, instead, some schools for the poor. The Jesuits, he said, had decided to close the Institute because "in order to place themselves at the service of the poor we must sever our links with the power structure". By running such a school, he added, the Fathers "implicitly furthered individualistic goals and class prejudices". The Mexican Cardinal — himself an alumnus of the Institute — publicly came out in favour of the decision taken by the Jesuit Fathers: "I am heartened", he said, "by their dedication and enthusiasm to help those most in need". Again, the strong implication that the first concern of the contemporary Church must be with the oppressed, who are identified with the materially poor — from which an increasing number of Catholics today are concluding that the practice of their religion is, in reality, no more and no less than the pursuit of social justice. And they are encouraged in this view by Bishops — in this country and elsewhere — who have a habit of saying that, though young people today are not much interested "in the institutional side of religion", they have a far greater concern for the poor than their predecessors did. In other words, humanism is a good, sound substitute for Christianity; which I am sure the Bishops never intended to say, but which they are thought of as advocating, when they talk in this wooly fashion, by an increasing number of Catholics, especially the young.

## *A Spanish Affair*

Out of the many that might be selected, there is one final example that seems to be representative of the prevailing view within the Church that identifies Christianity with the liberation of man from injustice and finds sanction for so doing in the Gospels. The example is in the shape of certain resolutions passed by the first-ever national assembly of Spanish bishops and priests held in Madrid in September of last year, 1971. These were criticised by the Congregation of the Clergy in a letter signed by its Prefect, Cardinal John Wright, and sent simultaneously, so it is said, to Cardinal Enrique Tarancon of Madrid and Cardinal Martin of Toledo, Primate of Spain, on February 8th of this year. It is fair to add that Cardinal Tarancon told assembled Spanish Bishops at their sixteenth plenary meeting in Madrid at the beginning of March this year that he had previously sought an audience with the Holy Father to discover what authority lay behind the letter from the Congregation of the Clergy signed by Cardinal Wright and that he had been informed that neither the Pope nor the Secretary of State, Cardinal Villot, had been told of the letter before it was sent. According to the *Tablet* (11/3/72), Cardinal Tarancon "was able to tell his fellow bishops that neither the Pope nor the Secretary of State, Cardinal Villot, had been informed of the document before it was sent. 'I did not want to embroil the Pope in the Matter', the Cardinal told the Bishops, 'but I requested an audience because I needed to know whether this mysterious process meant a loss of confidence of the Pope in me. I asked for complete and absolute clarity'. He went on to say that the Pope had told him to 'tell the Spanish Bishops that I am following the work of the conference with much interest . . . The September assembly had its faults and defects but has produced very important results . . . I am sure that now they (the Bishops) will know which path to take'. The Cardinal added that Cardinal Villot had confirmed that the Congregation's letter had 'not received approval from the Pope'."

I am not interested here in my mystery there may be concerning the publication of this letter, but in one or two of the points of criticism it made of the resolutions passed by the first-ever national assembly of Spanish bishops and priests held in Madrid in September, 1971. They reveal the national assembly — or, at least, a majority of its participants — as gripped by an attitude of mind increasingly prevalent, as it appears, by bishops and priests in other parts of the world. In illustration, I would quote direct from Cardinal Wright's letter in criticism of the resolutions of the Spanish assembly whose own words, when they occur, are indicated by single quotation marks:

### *Erroneous Resolutions*

"The complete 'sociological' levelling of priests and laity springs from the erroneous affirmation about the 'final disappearance of a distinction between the sacred and profane as regards the New Testament and the modern world' . . .

"In all the contributions to the discussion, especially those relating to the first resolution, there is a continual tendency to convert the mission of the Church into socio-political action which will affect all its other pastoral activities. There are some fifty propositions relating to this theme.

"The explicit view that 'the good news brought by Christ is the integral liberation of man' (in which is included as an essential and constitutive element his political and economic liberation) postulates the idea that the sacred ministry — and the Church as such — is essentially involved in politico-economic liberation, and accepts in some cases the idea that priests should undertake party-political activities and others which could even have a violent character.

"The primacy continuously attributed to this 'liberation' involves a 'collective' conception of morality and salvation. The 'supreme good' is an ambiguous social 'communion'.

Sin is frequently reduced to real or presumed injustice in the politico-social order.

"As a result of all this, an essentially horizontal (man-centered) vision of the priest's mission emerges, in which service to men 'in collective terms' takes precedence over the liturgy (when it is not dismissed as superfluous or accidental) and over the strictly spiritual aspect of the ministry (faith, sacraments, etc. which tend to show themselves as activated by politico-social or economic action, etc.).

". . . The general style is at times so vague that only a less-than-attentive reading would not reveal unacceptable points. At the same time, they insensibly lead the reader to positions which involve a real distortion of essential points of faith, of morality and of the discipline of the Church."

### *What is the Gospel Message?*

I think the points made by Cardinal Wright in his letter are clear and, indeed, serious enough. The criticism they contain can be levelled at other examples already given in this article and, indeed, at the whole prevailing trend in the Church. Questions come forcefully to mind. Is the good news brought by Christ that of the integral or total liberation of man, which would include his redemption not only from sin, but from every form of oppression on this earth; so that the task of the Church in the world of today is to associate with all in the struggle against injustice, confronting oppressive structures and establishments everywhere and using violence, where necessary, to overthrow them? Is the practice of Christianity, in other words, to be identified with the pursuit of justice and the smashing of oppression seen as its earthly goal? Is this the Gospel message — confrontation at all points where oppression occurs? Is this what Christ came to do, what He would have us do — concern ourselves, as Christians on this earth, primarily and regardless of all else with the material condition of man? What, in other words, is the relationship



between human liberation, ambiguous though the phrase may be, and salvation in and through Jesus Christ? Is the one a constitutive part of the other, so that the free flow of grace to men requires, as its sacramental counterpart, the confrontation and smashing by Christians everywhere of temporal and oppressive structures; which comes down, in the concrete, to the involvement of Christians in a permanent struggle on behalf of the poor in alliance, where necessary, with those similarly involved and to the point, where necessary, of violence and revolution?

Is this, then, the Gospel message — that the establishment of God's kingdom within the hearts of men, their attainment of justification within themselves in the Pauline sense of liberation from sin, requires as a concomitant and essential condition the establishment on earth of a socially just society; one, in other words, in which men are liberated from unjust and oppressive social structures as an essential part of the process of their liberation from sin? This is the view of the redemptive process put forward by those who say that Christ was not only a redeemer, but a revolutionary: as such, He was praised with unthinking blasphemy some years ago by a Catholic undergraduate at Sussex University, who remarked, in an incredibly naive article, that Our Lord resembled Che Guevara. This view of the Gospel message is now very trendy. Young Jesuits in the United States are going for it in a very big way. The examples cited already in this article show how widespread it is in the Church, how fast it is gaining ground, how rapidly it is pushing whole Hierarchies into confused confrontation with what they think of somewhat naively as oppressive social and political structures.

### *Opposing Views*

This trendy, contemporary view of the Gospel message is directly opposed to that which always has been and still is the official doctrine of the Church. This sees the justice brought to men by Christ Our Lord not in terms of a just social order devoid of oppressive structures, but essentially

as an interior thing within each man's soul, his justification (in the Pauline sense) in the eyes of God; so that liberation in the Gospel message does not signify the freeing of man from the weight of oppressive socio-political structures, but from that of his own sins. In other words, the liberation worked by Christ's Redemption was not total or integral, as the phrase goes today. It was, in essence and primarily, a liberation from sin, not from social injustice. For Christ Our Lord's justice, like his kingdom, was not of this world. Both were to be in the hearts of men. And the free flow of his saving grace was to be through the Sacraments, their effective working independent of temporal socio-political structures. Thus, the establishment of justice on earth is not *integral* to the Gospel message, though, indeed, *dependent* on it in this sense, that, where grace reigns in men's hearts, justice on earth comes easier to men; but this is a very different story and one, incidentally, that many proponents of the new view of Redemption — that Christ came primarily to liberate the whole man from every form of oppression — are at the point of denying in their words as well as their deeds. For them, as for Kwame Nkrumah, the political kingdom must first be sought. For Christ Our Lord it was the other way round: "Seek ye first", He said, "the Kingdom of God and his justice and all these things will be added unto you". In other words, the heart first — individual justification before God — and then justice amongst men. On the one view, a change of heart is the essential element in the redeeming story; on the other, a change of structures.

What we have to do in a following article is to see what Christ Himself had to say by word and deed on this all-important point in the Gospels.

(To be continued)

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# Readings at Mass

FRANCIS FENN, S.J.

**N**OW that Eastertide is over we are back in the green "Sundays of the Year". Beginning with the ninth Sunday (June 4) the second readings consist of sixteen extracts from St. Paul's letter to the Romans.

When he was writing this letter in the winter of 57-58, St. Paul was at a turning point in his missionary career. He had finished his work of planting the Church in the eastern Mediterranean and was turning his thoughts towards Spain. On his way there he would visit Rome, but first he wanted to go to Jerusalem to present in person the money he had collected from the churches of Greece in aid of the poor of the mother church of Christianity. This was to be a sign of the unity between Jewish and Gentile Christians (15,23-29).

Little could he have known that it would be three years before he arrived in Rome, and then as a prisoner; though he does ask his readers to pray that he "may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea" (15,31). This is only one of the passages in the letter which suggest that the Church in Rome was largely made up of non-Jews or "Gentiles", and that is the impression one gets from the end of the Acts of the Apostles; though Luke writes almost as if Rome, when Paul arrived there, had only a few Christians (Acts 28,15) and that the apostle was bringing the gospel to the capital of the Roman Empire as something quite new. This is in accordance with Luke's plan of showing how the Church, in the power of the Holy Spirit, spread from its small beginnings in Jerusalem "to the end of the earth" (Acts 1,8), very largely through the labours of St. Paul. But Luke himself was quite aware that Paul had met two Jewish Christians from Rome on his first visit to Corinth early in 51 (Acts 18,1-3): the same Aquila and his wife

Priscilla (or Prisca) are back in Rome seven years later when the apostle is in Corinth for the third time (Romans 16,3).

It is possible that some of the "visitors from Rome" who were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2,10) took back the Christian faith with them on their return, and there is definite evidence that there were Christians in Rome by the year 43. When Paul writes to them, their "faith is spoken of all over the (known) world" (1,8). That Peter lived for some time in Rome and (along with Paul) was martyred there during Nero's persecution (64-68) is generally accepted, but Paul would hardly have written as he did if Peter had then been living there.

"The importance of the Roman community is implied in the length of the letter and the care with which it is written. Paul was known only by hearsay to the Romans, but we must suppose that he was known; and not improbably he was known as a controversial figure" (J. L. McKenzie). Thus he would have thought that the best introduction of himself to the Romans was a full exposition of the theme that was most distinctive in his teaching: the salvation of all men through faith in Jesus Christ.

According to Paul's gospel, man is justified only by faith in Jesus Christ and not by doing something the Law tells him to do (3,28). The apostle attacks a false understanding of salvation according to which man merits his own justification by his observance of the divine Law, whereas in reality he is gratuitously justified by the death and resurrection of Christ. There is no doubt that the Law is from God; but of itself it is powerless to save the carnal man, who is the slave of sin. Even considering the Law in its moral aspect, it only gives a knowledge of what is good, not the strength to do it. The Jews who possess it and seek justification from its observance are sinners no less than the pagans. Instead of freeing men from evil, the Law can be said to involve them in it; it brings a curse upon men from which only Christ can rescue them by taking it upon himself. The Law served as a pedagogue



or tutor to God's people in their infancy. It taught them to desire a righteousness which was impossible to attain so that they would better understand their absolute need of their only Saviour.

By freeing man from sin, Christ also frees him from the tutelage of the Law. Does this mean that there is no rule of conduct for those who put their faith in Christ? Certainly not. The moral imperative of the commandments remains, but now it is incorporated into the commandments of love, which is the complete fulfilment of the Law. As the "Law of Christ" it is no longer exterior to man; the Spirit of God imprints it on our hearts when he fills them with his love (1). Paul is able to depict a moral ideal all the more demanding because its goal is Christian sanctity. (2)

In Matthew's gospel (read on these Sundays) our Lord tells us: "You must be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect" (3); and this aim is possible because we rely on the righteousness of God himself given us in Christ (4).

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(1) cf. Jeremiah 31, 33.

(2) *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, art. *Law* (pub. Geoffrey Chapman).

(3) Matt. 5, 44-48; cf. Luke 6, 35.

(4) 2 Corinthians 5, 21.

"The picture . . . that comes out of all this is a divided and selfish nation, dominated by powerful special interest groups that have no common concern for the national interest."

## Sauce for the Goose

E. L. WAY

FUNDAMENTAL questions will soon have to be asked and answered as to who shall speak for and govern the United Kingdom. And it will be no answer to rush laws through the House of Commons and then state that no one is above the law. Certain results of the Railway work-to-rule which have led to the Industrial Relations Court virtually forcing men to work overtime and disregard the railway rule book are, to say the least, most disquieting. For one side to claim a victory is extremely premature. There can be no ultimate solution by way of swingeing fines on the unions, nor can there be a railway service to the public if most of its operatives are threatened by jail sentences. In the end men can only be prevailed on to do their duty to their families and to the nation if they are convinced that they are getting a fair deal. And fines and threatened jail sentences are no part of a fair deal.

### *A Simple example*

A railwayman living in a house owned by the Southern Region of British Rail whose rent at the moment is £2.85 a week received the following letter:

Dear Sir,

#### **Rent Act 1968**

The tenancy by which you occupy your house is a regulated one under the Rent Act 1968 and, as you

may already know, the Act provides the assessment of Fair Rents in the cases of such tenancies. The procedure laid down is that the landlord, or the tenant, or both of them jointly may apply to the Rent Officer to fix a Fair Rent and I have today made a formal application to the Rent Officer, Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton Hill, London SW2.

In conjunction with the Surveyor for St. Thomas' Hospital, I have made enquiries as to the level at which rents of similar properties in the area have been registered by the Rent Officer recently and find that on this basis the Fair Rental Value of the flat you occupy should be in the region of £10.75 per week, plus rates, with you as tenant being responsible for interior decorative repair.

Although the figure shown above is the one I have entered on my application, it is realised that some hardship will be caused to you if your rent is increased to this level and I would therefore like to assure you that it is not my intention to bring the full amount into charge.

The Rent Officer may, of course, wish to vary the proposed rent in order to reflect the standard of the amenities provided and will almost certainly wish to inspect the property to discuss the matter with you before making his decision.

Yours faithfully,  
For J. L. Sampson,  
Assistant (Housing & Rating).

The matter was raised in the House of Commons on Monday, 17th April by Ian Mikardo M.P. with Maurice MacMillan, Secretary of State at the Department of Employment. Mr. Macmillan, after some hesitation, said he hoped that the railwayman would be assisted by the rent rebate scheme which will be available under the Housing Finance Bill. However, it is almost certain that this railwayman will be worse off at the end of this year financially, even if the full claim put in by his union is granted. In

fairness may I ask what option is open to him but to fight with his union for his meagre standard of living?

### *Speculators*

Speculators have pushed up the prices of houses so that the price of a house in London rose last year by no less than 21 per cent. For a man to buy a home of his own he ought to be receiving something like £2,000 a year. Now that the middle classes are feeling the pinch, the notion that only the feckless and the irresponsible are incapable of getting a home has increasingly been thrust aside. If we are going to have laws threatening unions with fines with prison sentences for their leaders, ought we not put an end to the social crimes of profiteers and speculators? Ought not many a profiteering landlord have gone to jail?

Nor does it help to deceive ourselves into thinking that the problem of being homeless is mostly due to the fault of big families. A report issued by the Shelter Housing Aid Centre in April described the average family that looks for its assistance: "A couple in their twenties with one or two children under five, the husband in full-time employment, earning about £1,500 per annum and more likely semi-skilled or in the service industries." (In fact in 61 per cent of cases such families have only one or two children.) The report goes on to point out that "homeless" means "houseless"; and this category does not include many who live in rat-infested hovels who at least have a roof over their heads. The London boroughs have over 192,000 names on their waiting lists. God knows how many more are on housing association waiting lists; and private landlords and letting agencies refuse to consider applications from families with children.

Can one wonder or complain if it is presently driven into the heads of thousands of such desperate people that 15 and 18 per cent increases in their wages are the only remedies for their plight? It is no use telling them that such increases will make things worse. To be without a

home with young children is an evil enough condition without worrying about anything else. Nor can an economic system that is not governed by morals and ideals cut any ice with the vast mass of ordinary decent people. It is plain enough to them that economics alone would turn us into a society that murdered its unwanted young and non-productive old, butchered its chronically sick, and electrocuted its insane. Morality has got to govern economics, as it will have to govern our politicians unless we wish to tear ourselves apart with a vicious selfishness that masquerades as enlightened self-interest.

### *The Americans*

However much the U.S. is troubled with the same type of problem as we are it has at least this to be said in its favour: its press, unlike our own, brands all equally. It does not wage a war against the workmen who make any wealth at all possible, and let the profiteers off scot-free. Read this blast-off from James Reston (*International Herald Tribune*), and see how much fits us exactly:

"In the last few days [17 April] the administration has claimed that 80 per cent of the income tax returns made out by the tax advisers are fraudulent, that there is widespread price gouging and miscellaneous chiseling by producers at the expense of consumers, and that organized labor is just as selfish in opposing the Wage Board as business is in evading the anti-inflation policies of the Price Board.

"The picture of America that comes out of all this is a divided and selfish nation, dominated by powerful special interest groups that have no common concern for the national interest.

"You can hardly pick up a paper these days without reading about some company or union or congressman, or even some sports star, who has evaded or defied the rules . . ."



And does anybody believe that increasing prices are due to higher wages alone? In the U.S. they are more honest. Rising prices are there put down to corporate monopolistic power. An inflationary bias is built into the very structure of their (and our) corporate economy. And economic concentration puts an end to competition which alone might make the system workable.

### *The I.T.T.*

The International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation affair shows once more the influence of huge corporations in government affairs. Whether ITT's proposed contribution to Republican Party funds in settlement of anti-trust suits were connected in any way has still to be decided. But easy access of ITT executives to government officials, the withdrawing of statements, the Chile memorandums, the interferences of ITT in U.K. government contracts have certainly made all these conglomerates suspect. Will laws be passed to curb their activities? Or shall we be content to pursue miners, railwaymen and agricultural workers backed up by the hysterical war whoops of our backwoodsmen?

Let us consider ITT's performance with the Macmillan government in 1954 very briefly. ITT's backstage manoeuvring has only recently surfaced when the U.S. Justice department produced in court a bunch of ITT's private files seeking thereby to show that the corporation was not fit to own ABC, one of the leading U.S. television networks.

Multi-national companies generally conduct their business with tact (furtively), discretion and behind locked doors. This is what makes the ITT's involvement in American, Chilean and U.K. politics so educative an exercise. The ITT knew that the British government would not easily grant landing rights for the new transatlantic cable, as operation 'Deep Freeze', as it was called, would be in direct competition with the nationalised British Cable and Wireless Company, and would of course be opposed by

our own GPO. But as the Justice Department noted in its case the company was not without influence:

"ITT had occasion to engage in discussions at the highest levels of a number of foreign governments, to make use of, and benefit from, personal friendships with some of the highest officials of these governments and to seek out (and receive) confidential information" (*The Guardian*, 21 April).

Should not the public know of leaks of confidential government information, of "twisting arms of friendly Ministers and civil servants, personal favours, and discreet codenames for high level sources"? Instead of hounding workers because they are determined to have their share of the national cake ought we not, in short, to be chasing profiteers, hot-currency speculators, land hoarders, loan sharks, and giant multi-national corporations that by their influence and machinations can topple governments in South America, maintain regimes like the colonels' in Greece, and generally speaking play ducks and drakes with all the processes of democratic government?

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# Reflections on the Budget

J. M. JACKSON

**E**VERYBODY had assumed that there would be substantial tax remissions in the Budget, and in the event the concessions announced amounted to £1,200 million. The question that everybody will now be asking is whether this will be enough to get the economy moving again and bring down the present high level of unemployment. This is not an easy question to answer. The gross domestic product is now running at a level of some £34,000 million a year. The tax remissions therefore represent something like  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent of the value of our total annual output of goods and services in this country. A very simple calculation would suggest that with unemployment running at around 4 per cent, the tax concessions ought to make a very substantial contribution to reducing this unhappy figure.

In fact, the question is much more complicated, and a full examination of the issues involved suggest that the impact of the tax changes may be less significant than at first seems likely. A  $3\frac{1}{2}$  percent boost to demand might be expected to involve a roughly comparable increase in employment. There are, however, a number of factors which suggest that the impact will be rather less than this. First it must be recognised that a cut in taxes of £1,200 million does not necessarily mean an increased demand for goods and services of the same amount. Some of the benefits received by taxpayers may simply lead to increased savings. Part of what they spend may go to purchase imported goods and therefore make no contribution to reducing unemployment at home. Perhaps the most serious factor however is the inflationary upward creep of tax yields. The £1,200 million give-away is by comparison with the estimated yield of taxation in 1972/73 had there been no tax changes. The treasury estimate that without the Budget

changes the yield of taxation in 1972/73 would have been about £2,400 million higher than it was in 1971/72. People's incomes are rising and so are the prices of most goods and services. As this happens, the yield of income tax naturally increases; so does the yield of purchase tax which is a percentage of the cost of the goods subject to tax. The latter will tend to rise in proportion to the total value of goods sold; income tax will rise more than proportionately to the increase in incomes. This is because a very high proportion of the increased incomes will be subject to tax whereas a larger proportion of the original income was tax free.<sup>1</sup> So in fact the so-called tax cuts merely serve to maintain government revenue at £1,200 million above its 1971/72 level instead of £2,400 million.

This might seem to suggest that the Budget in fact makes no net contribution to increasing demand. This, however, is ignoring what is happening to government spending. A £2,200 million increase is likely here, so that the current surplus on the Budget in 1971/72 would have increased by £200 million. Instead of the surplus increasing by £200 million, the cuts mean that it has been reduced by £1,000 million.

As we have said already, savings and spending on imports will mean that the boost to demand and employment will be substantially less. There is also the possibility that a substantial increase in output in response to increased demand may be possible without an increase in employment. There is at present high unemployment, but some firms may nevertheless be employing more labour than they strictly need at current levels of output. An increase in demand can therefore be met without a corresponding increase in employment. Against this, however, it must be remembered that the effect of any boost to employment may be multiplied. If some new jobs are created and

(1) Suppose a man has an income of £1,000 and tax free allowances of £500. He pays tax on £500 at 38.75 per cent, a total of roughly £194 or nearly 19½ per cent. Suppose now his income rises to £1,270. If this is earned income, his tax free allowances will increase by two-ninths of £270, so he will pay tax on £210 at 38.75 per cent, an extra £101. He will now be paying £295 in tax or 23 per cent of his income.

workers have more to spend, this additional spending by those newly employed will in turn create new jobs; and so on. There is a good chance therefore that the cuts made will have a significant impact on the level of demand and on the level of employment. Whether it will be enough to reduce unemployment as much as some people would like is another matter. Nobody has really solved the problem of precise economic forecasting. It is all too easy to make changes in taxation which are too small or too great. Indeed, past experience suggests that Chancellors are unlikely to get their sums right. They are almost certain to make too small an adjustment or else one so great that they create the opposite problem to the one they are trying to solve.

### *Tax Changes 1972/73*

The Chancellor announced important tax changes for the current financial year as well as foreshadowing important tax reforms in a year's time. The most important changes for the present year were the raising of the income tax personal allowance from £325 to £460 and a similar raising of the allowance for a married couple by £135 to £600; the cutting of the higher rates of purchase tax (45 per cent and 30 per cent) to 25 per cent; and changes relating to the treatment of capital expenditure by business firms.

The raising of the income tax personal allowance by £135 is a very bad change. It has been taken by the Chancellor on the dubious grounds of simplicity and offering everybody (at least in the taxpaying income ranges) a significant bonus of £1 a week. It is a measure which has been introduced without the slightest regard for an equitable distribution of the relief that the Chancellor could afford to give. Next year, changes in the form of allowances are to be made, and it is to be hoped that when this change is made the Chancellor will redress the unfair treatment in this Budget of families with dependent children. Why should



a system have been chosen which gave exactly the same relief to the single person and to the taxpayer with a family? The logical change to have made would have been to increase all the allowances — the personal allowance, the married allowance and the child allowances — in the same proportion. This might have given the single taxpayer a gain of about 64p a week, a married couple 92p plus 24p for each child.<sup>2</sup> If this course had been adopted, the single taxpayer would get perhaps a third less than under the actual proposal of the Chancellor, the married couple would get very slightly less, and the family with three children over 50 per cent more. It is perhaps worth mentioning that whilst the married man with a family gets only the same £1 a week relief as the single taxpayer, the childless couple where both are working receive a £2 a week benefit under the proposals put forward in the Budget.<sup>3</sup>

The lowering of the two higher rates of purchase tax was certainly a desirable move. It may be argued that these concessions apply mainly to a limited range of luxury goods and that means should have been found of helping poorer taxpayers. Objectors will point to the fact that the changes in income tax do nothing for those with incomes that are so low that they are already below the limit for paying income tax. Certainly one may consider the desirability of having given some measure of help to those not paying income tax. On the other hand, the very high rates of purchase tax undoubtedly distorted the whole market for certain goods. The very high prices resulting from the inordinately high rates of tax may well hinder the development of the British industries affected. With the home demand curtailed by the high prices, output is low and the chances of developing an export trade limited. The high prices of a

(2) These are very rough estimates. The increases are proportional to the present allowances. The absolute amounts might be different if the Chancellor had made a change of this kind.

(3) This is because the working wife gets a special earned income allowance of seven-ninths of her earnings up to a maximum equal to the personal allowance for a single person. To secure the full benefit from Mr. Barber's proposals, a working wife must in fact be earning at least £600 a year.

small range of goods subject to these very high rates of purchase tax discourage people from choosing certain ways of spending their incomes, although they may be nothing inherently undesirable about them. Some people have argued that these are luxury goods, but this is not entirely true. Certainly they are not necessities, but it is quite untrue to say that they are mainly luxuries of the mink coat or expensive jewellery class. For example, all photographic equipment and materials have been subject to the top rate of purchase tax. Why should one hobby be singled out for exceptional penalties in the way of taxation?<sup>4</sup>

### *Industrial Development*

The Budget also announced important changes regarding depreciation allowances and investment grants. The changes here may not be so readily understood by the man in the street. It is perhaps necessary to explain first what depreciation is and then to consider the advantages to the business man of the free depreciation which he is now offered and the investment grants available in the depressed regions of the country.

A firm sets up in business to produce certain goods. In the course of the year, it may sell goods worth £100,000. It will incur costs for labour, raw materials and the like amounting to, say, £30,000. It is liable to pay corporation tax at the rate of 40 per cent on its profits. However, its profit is not £70,000. The production of the firm will only be possible because it has spent money on building a factory and equipping it with machinery. This machinery may cost £250,000 and have a life of ten years.<sup>5</sup> It might

(4) It must be thought that one is concerned here solely with very expensive equipment which is imported. The prices of cameras for example may range from £3 to £500, but all were taxed at the same excessive rate of tax. Nor must it be thought that this is a field where we are entirely dependent upon imports. Admittedly, there is no British made camera of quality but there is a vast British production of simple cameras and much other equipment and materials. In fact, there is probably a net export from Britain of photographic equipment and materials despite a complete dependence on Japan and Germany for the bulk of good quality

(5) For simplicity it is here assumed that the cost of the building is small compared with that of the equipment and is therefore ignored.

be said, therefore, that since the firm needs to recover this capital investment over its working life, £25,000 ought to be set aside each year in depreciation. In the absence of rising prices, this would enable the firm to replace its equipment when worn out and continue in production. If we include this depreciation as part of the firm's cost, the profit is only £45,000. The firm would then pay £18,000 in tax. In the past, some arrangement such as this has operated. The plant is depreciated at an agreed rate, but if the plant is replaced within the predicted lifetime, the balance of the cost would be allowed as depreciation in the year of replacement.

With free depreciation, the firm is free to write its investment off as soon as possible. In the first year, the firm has outlays of £30,000 and could choose to charge the whole difference between this figure and its sales revenue of £10,000 as depreciation. Assuming its sales revenue and costs continue at the same level in future years, it could charge £70,000 to depreciation in each of the first three years and the remaining £40,000 in the fourth year. Thereafter, of course, the only costs each year would be £30,000 and £70,000 would be taxable profit. Of course, under either method, the sum allowed as a deduction from profits (or more accurately from sales revenue in calculating profits) is the same, the £250,000 which the equipment cost in the first place. There are, however, two advantages to the firm in free depreciation which enables them to claim the allowance at an earlier date. First, they delay paying tax and have the use of funds in the earlier stages of the enterprise. With the normal method of depreciation, the firm would pay £18,000 in tax in each of the first three years. When the firm is allowed free depreciation, it has £18,000 more available when it starts the second year than when it is only allowed to charge £25,000 depreciation a year. If it had to borrow money at 8 per cent interest, to have this postponement of tax is worth £1,440 a year. Secondly, the firm may have a fairly good idea of its prospects in the early years of a venture

but only a hazy idea of prospects in the more distant future. It may be that if a firm can only charge a tenth of the cost of its equipment to depreciation in each year, it will regard the project as rather risky. Consider what would happen in the first four years. It would pay £30,000 a year for wages and materials, and £18,000 a year in taxation. It would have £52,000 a year available for re-investment and distribution in profits, or £208,000 altogether. Making maximum use of free depreciation, it would have £268,000. In the former case, it would still need £42,000 to recover the cost of its original investment whereas in the second case it would already have available £18,000 over and above the cost of the investment. The quicker the cost of the investment can be recovered, the safer the venture will appear and the more likely the firm will be to undertake it. It will not be so dependent upon trading prospects in the later years when there is more chance that its product will lose ground to some new competing product or have to face competition from another firm which has devised a new and lower cost technique of production.

Until now, the present government has limited free depreciation to the development areas. The new measures, extending free depreciation to all enterprises, may serve to encourage investment and so make a further contribution to getting the economy in top gear and reducing unemployment. For the depressed areas, investment grants have been restored. These have an even greater impact than free depreciation as an encouragement to investment. Free depreciation can only benefit a firm if there are profits against which depreciation can be charged. With the investment grant, the firm spends £250,000 on new equipment and may be given a cash grant of £50,000 towards the cost by the government. It can then depreciate the remaining £200,000 as it pleases under the free depreciation provision. This puts even more cash in the firm's hands in the early days and enables the cost of the investment to be recovered even more quickly, reducing the risks still further. This method, favoured by the Labour Party may well encourage

investment in the development areas, though there is some danger that it may encourage unwise as well as sound investments.

## *Conclusion*

The other feature of the Budget was the 75p increase in pensions and other social security benefits. This is welcome, though many will find it a rather meagre increase. On the other hand, the cost of pensions and other social security benefits is high and must be paid for by contributions. The government has probably gone as far as possible in this direction.

The Budget speech also made important announcements about the future of both direct and indirect taxation. There may be changes in income tax which move in the direction of combining it with a negative tax, a substitute for means tested social security benefits of various kinds. In addition, some details of the form of the new Value Added Tax have been given. These are topics that will have to be considered in a later article.

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## **From a Letter**

"Your remark about nobody appearing to be praying in your editorial, reminded me of a quotation from Pope John XXIII which is very relevant. I got it from an article by a contemplative nun in the Dublin Diocesan Bulletin. Here it is:

'It was above all by the offering of prayer to His Father and sacrificing Himself that Our Redeemer brought salvation to humanity, as it lay chained and oppressed by sin. And so it follows, that all those who, by their prayer and sacrifice associate themselves with this intimate spirit of the saving work of Christ, exercise the apostolate in an eminent manner, although they are engaged in no external activity.' "



Is the Anglican Church nearer to Catholicism than it is to Protestantism? Is what we call the love of God just a rarefied form of egoism? Doesn't the Church's fostering of oecumenism and religious liberty strengthen the view that one religion is as good as another?

## Any Questions?

WILLIAM LAWSON, S.J.

**Is the Anglican Church nearer to Catholicism than it is to Protestantism?**

Your question is unanswerable. How do you define "Protestantism"? How, even, do you describe it? It is not a single entity, as is the Catholic Church. Rather it is a proliferation of private opinions about the nature of Christianity. When you have said that someone is a Catholic, you have given full information about that one's religious allegiance; but call someone a Protestant and you invite the question: "What sort of Protestant?" As you know, there are more varieties than even an expert could fully enumerate. The one fact you can be sure of about a Protestant is that he is not a Catholic. After that, for the content of his Christian belief, you must enquire painstakingly, trying to discover what part of Catholic doctrine he does not accept; and you must be prepared to find that he is himself unable to answer your questions.

You could make a list of the essential Catholic doctrines — the Blessed Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the seven sacraments, the Sacrifice of the Mass, transubstantiation, the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, her perpetual virginity, and so on — and call those Protestants nearest to the Church who have dropped the fewest doctrines. By that measurement, Anglicans would be nearest to

Catholicism. But they are still as Protestant as the rest, in their selectiveness: they reject the idea of a teaching authority in the Church, infallible when it propounds doctrine on faith and morals to be held by all the faithful. It is arguable that Anglicans are furthest of all Protestants from the Church. Holding most of the doctrines of Catholicism, their "protest" is concentrated in that one denial of a teaching authority which can bind their conscience; and so concentrated a denial is likely to be stubborn.

### **Is what we call our love of God just a rarefied form of egoism ?**

It could be egoism, but crude rather than rarefied. Cupboard love is not all that refined. By the most ordinary human standards, love which is on the make is not love which the object of it would want. It is gross selfishness, insulting to its target. To love not God but what is in God's gift, eternal happiness, is to suppose that a happy eternity is a state separable from God or enjoyable apart from God. It is, in fact, union with God Himself; and it is only true love which can achieve that union.

Your difficulty comes, perhaps, from the knowledge we must all have, that we are bound to benefit from a genuine love of God. However altruistic we try to be, we can't help knowing that perfect altruism brings the satisfaction of our ego. The solution of the difficulty can be seen in our human relationships. To love another person is a need of our nature. It is by dedicating ourselves to others that we save ourselves from being nobody. We receive ourselves only when we give ourselves to others. But we know that the giving has to be sincere. In honesty we could not, as it were, write a letter to ourselves and use another person as an accommodation address where we can pick up the letter still sealed. And our experience proves that we can, in our giving, have the other's good in mind all the time, hardly adverting to the

change for the better in ourselves which must result from the unselfishness of love. Towards God we can at least begin with our faith that his boundless love for us should make us want to love Him for that manifest goodness, and our love will be true in intention. It's a good start.

**Doesn't the Church's fostering of oecumenism and religious liberty give support to the judgment that one religion is as good as another?**

There is that danger, and there is also the twin danger of suggesting that subjective truth is all that matters, and objective truth is negligible. We have repeatedly been warned against just those dangers, so we have only ourselves to blame if we fall into them. We should clarify our minds by reference to the documents of the Second Vatican Council, on the principles behind respect for other religions and other consciences. Our concern ought always to be for truth — reality, things as they are.

To join with others in a search for truth is human and companionable. A common ground from which to start can always be found. From then on, each member of the search-party is obliged to make available to all what he knows or thinks to be true. If he is certain that a proposed path is a cul-de-sac or leads to error, he must say so. It would be dishonourable to withhold truth or accept error. The purpose of the expedition is not to remain in company but to arrive at truth; and one must expect a mixed group of travellers to come sometimes to a parting of the ways. Catholics, having a certainty of faith through the Church, owe the communication of that certainty to those whose conflicting "certainty" is psychological only — subjective and not at the same time objective. How they communicate must be decided by charity to suit different circumstances; but charity would never suggest an abandonment of truth or a dilution of it. It is truth that brings freedom, and it is only from that freedom that we can truly love others.

**High Churchmen of the Anglican denomination reject the word "transubstantiation" and all that it implies. Leaving aside the question of the validity of their orders, how do they explain the Real Presence after the words of consecration ?**

There is no official statement of High Church doctrine on the Holy Eucharist which all High Churchmen are bound to accept under pain of ceasing to belong to the Anglican denomination. Explanations of the Real Presence given by Anglicans are personal and no one of them can be taken as belonging to the whole organization. You will have seen mention in the press of a statement made by a joint commission of Anglican and Catholic theologians on Eucharistic doctrine. Although the members of the Commission were officially appointed, their statement is unofficial. It is unacceptable to Catholics because of its ambiguity (to say the least) about the nature of the Sacrifice of the Mass and its abandonment of transubstantiation as doctrine. It does, for our purpose, show the vagueness of the Anglican position as well as their tendency to hark back to the Reformation changes. Which of the versions of the Real Presence they are inclined to favour it is impossible to say without something like a referendum. In 1577 a book was published in Ingolstadt called *Two Hundred Interpretations of the Words: This is my Body*. Maybe the Lutheran doctrine of companation, that in, with, and under the substance of bread and wine Christ is really present, is the one most favoured; but that is only a guess — and your guess is as good as mine.

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# Book Review

**Romans : Exposition of Chapters 3/20-4/25** by Martyn Lloyd Jones; Banner of Truth Trust; pp. 256; £1.25.

I am writing just after the ecumenical season has passed. I took my usual small share in it — chiefly by singing “Jesus, lover of my soul” (in Welsh) and Isaac Watt’s “Come ye that Love the Lord, and Let your Joys be Known,” in a Rhondda chapel where Catholics also sang a hymn to Mary.

Dr. Martyn’s new book is called *Romans: Exposition of Chapters 3/20-4/25*. A dull title? I answer that Belloc somewhere complained of writers who put flashy titles to their works which seemed to bear no resemblance to what was on the cover. But here we have a most exact title, a little reminiscent of those grand old Puritan works like Bunyan’s *Concerning Justification by an Imputed Righteousness* or, *No Way to Heaven but by Jesus Christ*.

It would be extremely easy for me to examine an array of matters considered by Dr. Martyn in this book. I shall, however, confine myself to what I believe are three gravely important points he examines.

The first comes fairly early in his book where he treats of St. Paul’s words, “the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men”. Writes Dr. Martyn: “I want to emphasise the order in which the Apostle puts these two things, for not only is this order not observed today: it is being violated and that deliberately”. “Diolch i Ti, O Dduw” — “Praise be to Thee, O God” — from the top gallery. Dr. Martyn is perfectly right in holding that the blessed apostle Paul is not wasting his ink in writing a pleonasm. That is very well for Psalms, which indeed call for such shouts as, *Laudate Dominum, omnes gentes, praedicate Eum, omnes populi*. No; the great



postle is distinguishing one from the other and putting them in the right order. I can't improve upon Dr. Martyn's commentary here which includes these words: "This (order) is particularly important today, for the modern approach in the Church, and obviously in the world, is to say that the real problem is that of uprightness and that alone. Ungodliness is not mentioned. The great problem, we are told, is the problem of man and particularly the problem of man in society. We are told that the great need today is to reconcile man to man, and that this is the task of the Church . . . That is where they begin and that is where they end. Someone has summed it up by saying that man's great need is to find 'a gracious neighbour'. In addition to this and to that end we are told that what we need is to be cured of our ills and weaknesses. Sin is regarded as a sickness, a disease, of which we need to be cured. But all the time, you notice, it is in terms of man and man's relationship to man. It does not mention what the Apostle puts first — ungodliness, man in his relationship to God."

I am not, of course, surprised that a conservative Evangelical like Dr. Martyn should speak thus. It remains that T. S. Eliot was saying it years before the war, and Eliot was an Anglo-Catholic. Perhaps Dostoievski was saying it in another way when he exclaimed: "What is the use of Communism to a soul in agony"? The Catholic Church has, in spite of some recent eccentrics, been saying it ever since Pentecost simply because Our Lord reinforced with his incarnate authority the order of loving God and then loving our neighbour. That Dr. Martyn and many, many of us are obliged to repeat it and then repeat it again illustrates the malaise of the Church in our day.

Maritain may be said to have said all this for Catholics: "The present crisis has many diverse aspects. One of the most curious spectacles it offers us is a kind of kneeling before the world . . . In other words there is henceforth only the earth. A complete temporalisation of Christianity". Maritain then in satirical vein tells us of the three things Catholic priests should not speak about:

"The first thing to leave in oblivion is obviously the other world (since there isn't any).

"The second thing to leave in oblivion is the Cross (it is only a symbol of the momentary sacrifices demanded by Progress).

"The third thing to leave in oblivion is sanctity — if it is true that sanctity has its principle at the centre of the soul (even if the saint remains plunged in the activities of the world) in a radical break with the world (in the Gospel sense of the word) and with the false god of the world, its mystical god, 'the emperor of this world'."

The *second point* is perhaps more subtle and all the more dangerous on that account. It is the defectiveness of what we are now being urged to be — Christocentric. The warning comes most properly from Dr. Martyn who, like other conservative Evangelicals, has so high a regard for St. Bernard and for St. Bernard's sweet devotion to the sacred humanity of Our Lord. But see what St. Paul writes: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God". Dr. Martyn comments: "You would, perhaps, have expected that there Paul would have said, 'the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ'. But Paul says 'the Gospel of God'. This kind of thing is not accidental; it is something the Apostle always says and always stresses. I am calling attention to this because of the tendency today almost to leave God out altogether and to speak only about and in terms of the Lord Jesus Christ. In our evangelical zeal we so concentrate upon the Son, the second Person, as almost to ignore the Father. People even seem to pray to the Lord Jesus always, and it is about Him they always speak; and so God the Father seems forgotten, neglected and ignored. Surely this is a very terrible and serious thing."

It certainly is. That prayer after prayer of the Catholic Church in her divine liturgy concludes with some formula that at once relates to the Three Persons and is from one point of view a prayer to God the Father deserves our attention, even if we have noticed it before. As Chesterton

reminded us, a man may see something a hundred times and then see it the hundred and first time for the first time.

Alas, when I come upon the *third point*, I regretfully have to depart from my old friend. For here he repeats that very doctrine of Luther which sometimes seems to me to have as much to do with the changes of religion, at the time of the Reformation, as the reformers' several views upon the Eucharist.

The doctrine of Luther which Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones raises aloft is that of justification by faith alone. It goes with Luther's general theology upon this head. I believe I discern a certain inconsistency here. From time to time (and I have cited at least one example) Dr. Martyn is at pains to show that St. Paul did not write loosely or theatrically or poetically or ambiguously. But here Dr. Martyn tells us that, even though St. Paul did not add "alone", it must be added for didactic purposes. Whose didactic purposes? St. Paul's? I answer that no one would know better than St. Paul whether he should have taken due account of didactics. A reader might be forgiven if Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones meant that the didactic purposes were those of Martin Luther.

I have so many possible sources of quotation concerning what Dr. Martyn has to write upon this and closely related heads that I am hard put to choose one. But I shall provide one which comes towards the end of his book of more than 250 pages: "To use the language that the Apostle uses elsewhere the Christian believes that God has imputed (reckoned) his sins to Jesus Christ and that God has also reckoned the righteousness of Jesus Christ to him . . . That is justification by faith. It is legal — forensic. It is the declaration of God to us, as we are in our sins".

Quite correctly, Dr. Martyn contrasts this Lutheran doctrine with Catholic doctrine. He correctly writes that the Catholic Church regards justification and sanctification as inseparable. Trent put it: "Justification is the translation from that condition in which man is born as the son of the first Adam into the state of grace and adoption among

the children of God through the second Adam, Jesus Christ, Our Redeemer". On the negative side there is an eradication of sin; on the positive there is a hallowing and renewal of the inner man.

I notice in a fairly recently published *Encyclopedia of Living Faiths* (Hutchinson) that a certain John Kent, writing upon Protestantism has this to say: "Luther recognised the danger of what he was saying and saw that when his insight was taught to people unskilled in religious matters, it might lead them to be careless, negligent and slothful. He complained bitterly that if he emphasised the necessity of faith (fiducial — my interpolation) ordinary men and women neglected everything else and thought goodness unimportant; whereas if he began to emphasise the keeping of God's law, they took it that nothing else mattered and their faith suffered instead".

Even so, Luther's deep sense of what he called faith compelled him to over-emphasise it (notably in his commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians). And it is not so surprising that Luther was capable of writing one of his rudest letters (and many were very rude) to Jean Calvin whose catechism (1553) contains these words: "Can we believe in order to be justified without performing good works? It is impossible. For the belief in Jesus Christ means receiving Him as He offers Himself to us. Now He promises us not only to deliver us from death and restore us in the grace of God, the Father, through the merits of His Son, but also to regenerate us by the Spirit to make us lead holy lives".

Zwingli, a radical reformer, wrote thus to the princes of Germany: "The sanctification of the Spirit is true justification which alone suffices to justify".

Richard Baxter, the Calvinist "saint of Kidderminster", had this to say: "That some ignorant wretches gnash their teeth at the doctrine as if it were flat Popery, not understanding the nature of the righteousness which is all out of Christ ourselves though wrought by the power of the Spirit of Christ in us".



Beza, one of the most learned Protestant reformers, wrote: "I take the name of justification largely so as it comprehends whatsoever we acquire from Christ as well by imputation as by the efficacy of the Spirit in sanctifying us".

I list these other Protestant Reformers of that vitally important epoch to which Dr. Martyn looks:

Paraeus (Calvinist). "We never at any time said or thought that the righteousness of Christ was imputed to us, that by Him we should be named formally just and not be so, as we have divers times already showed, for that would no less soundly fight with right reason than if a guilty man absolved in judgment was formally just by the clemency of the judge granting him his life".

Thysius: "Neither diffide we because of the most great and strict connection that justification doth sometimes seem also to comprehend sanctification".

Zanchius: "There is another signification of the word, viz. for a man from unjust to be made just even as sanctified signifies from unholy to be made holy".

Melancthon: "That to be justified by faith signifies in Scripture not only to be pronounced just also unrighteous to be made righteous".

Martin Borhaeus (upon Romans IV 25; "Who was given for our sins and rose again for our justification"): "There are two things beheld in Christ which are necessary for our justification; the one is His death, the other is His rising from the dead. In His death is beheld the satisfaction for sin. By His rising from the dead it pleased the same goodness of God to give the Holy Spirit by which our justification is perfected. Both these kinds of righteousness are therefore contained in justification; neither can the one be separated from the other."

The "judicious" Hooker of the Anglican Church had much the same to say together with many reformers both moderate and radical. Of course, the most radical of all, the Quakers, were most vigorously opposed to Luther's doctrine as we may see from a whole thesis by Robert



Barclay in his scholarly *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* (proposition seven). Barclay, a convert to the Quakers from Scottish Presbyterianism, wrote the *Apology* at the early age of 24 and dedicated it to his cousin Charles II. He attacks Catholic doctrine in this proposition but devotes the major part to showing that Luther's doctrine was erroneous. From the Quaker point of view — dominated by the Inner Light and fortified with the words, "if the light within you be darkness how great is that darkness" — Luther's doctrine was utterly untenable.

I am naturally by no means happy in parting company from my old friend, Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones, over this matter. I may put some salve upon any wound I have inflicted if I declare my conviction that there is something very seriously wrong with a Catholic who possesses "dogmatic faith" and lacks "fiducial faith". It was undoubtedly necessary from the days of Wycliffe onwards to insist upon *ex opere operato*. But to neglect *ex opere operantis* is to be a stock or a stone. I am told by some of my progressive friends that the *Missa Normativa* gives us a greater opportunity to exercise our spirits in this latter way. I fear they are wrong. Yesterday, I tuned into the Vatican to hear the Byzantine Mass which is what St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil gave our eastern brethren many centuries ago. Its blend of the hieratic and remote and the near, the vertical and the horizontal, provides an extraordinarily good ground wherein we may excite our faculties in the adoration of the Blessed Trinity.

And that, after all, is what I ought to have chiefly in mind. It is good to know that that is what my friend, Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones, has chiefly in mind.

Henry Edwards.